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**Legislators, Law Enforcement, MDCR, Civil Rights Groups
Join together to Announce New 'Hate Crimes' Legislation**

Lansing, MI – This afternoon Senator Hansen Clarke and Representative Paul Condino held a press conference at the Capitol to announce the Bias Motivated Crime Act; legislation intended to replace Michigan's currently enforced Ethnic Intimidation Act. Lansing Police Chief Mark Alley, Washtenaw County Prosecutor Brian Mackie, and Department of Civil Rights Director Linda V. Parker also spoke at the conference in support of the legislation. Representatives from more than a dozen community groups also attended the event.

"Bias motivated crimes do greater harm to both the victim and the larger community," stated Representative Condino. "This new law provides more sentencing options for courts and better tools for law enforcement to effectively combat such crimes."

The new legislation will enhance certain areas of the current law, and clarify others, including increasing sentencing options for crimes motivated by the perpetrator's bias. Other changes or clarifications include:

- A person must have committed a crime before a prosecutor can even consider charging the act as a bias motivated crime. Renaming the legislation the Bias Motivated Crime Act clarifies that this law does not create a new type of crime; rather it changes sentencing options based on the motivations of current crimes.
- Covering crimes based on the perpetrators motivation, whether or not the victim is actually a member of the perceived group.
- Adding crimes motivated by disability, sexual orientation, and identity or expression.
- Making the hanging of a noose on a person's property a crime if the noose was hung with malicious intent. Under current legislation, the person may not be charged with committing a hate crime if the noose did not damage the property.

Senator Clarke noted the importance of charging a bias crime based on the perpetrator's intent, rather than whether the victim actually belonged to the perceived group. "Under the current legislation, a person who assaults a Muslim because of their religion may not be charged with a hate crime if it turns out the victim is not actually a member of that religion. This loophole ignores the intent of the criminal, and the very real impact the assault has on the larger Muslim community."

“It’s also important to note that the new legislation does not infringe upon freedom of speech,” Prosecutor Mackie added. “A person can only be charged with a Bias Motivated Crime if they have committed a separate crime. This is not about expressing unpopular opinions, but about hateful motivations behind crimes.”

Chief Alley added, “From a law enforcement perspective, hate crime laws are not just about the victims; they are about communities. We have seen in recent instances how a hate crime directed against one group within a community can affect the entire community. For example, restaurants and other businesses may suffer a loss in customers if they are the location of a hate assault.”

“As a former federal prosecutor I understand the need to make sure the courts have the proper means to address the motivations of the perpetrator,” concluded Director Parker. “All crimes are not the same and do not impact the victim or community equally. Law enforcement requested these changes, and I am most pleased that both Clarke and Condino have proposed some real solutions.

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